

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-04

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 OMB-01

ACDA-05 ERDA-05 L-03 EB-07 TRSE-00 ERDE-00 PRS-01

SAJ-01 /069 W

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O R 261350Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6723

SECDEF

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

CINCLANT

CINCUSNAVEUR

USCINCEUR

USLOSACLANT

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T THE HAGUE 4901

DOD PASS SECNAV

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, NL

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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS FORCE REDUCTIONS: SECNAV MIDDENDORF MEETING

WITH MOD VREDELING

1. SEC NAV MIDDENDORF AND I CALLED ON MOD VREDELING ON SEPT. 19 WHO SAID HE HAD CALLED FOR CABINET RECESS TO KEEP APPOINTMENT.

2. FOLLOWING EXCHANGE OF GREETINGS SEC NAV ADDRESSED PROPOSED REDUCTION IN DUTCH NAVAL FORCE STRENGTH, STRESSING THE GREAT CONCERN WITH WHICH U.S. REGARDED SUCH A STAND-DOWN. NOT ONLY WOULD THE DUTCH FAIL TO COMPLETE NATO TASKS WHICH THEY HAD UNDERTAKEN TO PERFORM; EQUALLY BAD, OR PERHAPS EVEN WORSE, WAS THE PERCEPTION BY BOTH ALLIES AND WARSAW PACT NATIONS OF UNILATERAL DUTCH REDUCTIONS. FROM HIS JUST-COMPLETED TRIPS TO GERMANY AND TO NATO HEAD-QUARTERS HE HAD LEARNED THAT THE DUTCH PROPOSALS, ESPECIALLY THAT CALLING FOR THE TERMINATION OF MARITIME AIR PATROLS HAD BEEN RECEIVED VERY UNFAVORABLY BY THE GERMANS, BY THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS AND BY GENERAL HAIG. THE SECRETARY WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE MINISTER WAS PERSONALLY OPPOSED TO THE PROPOSALS AND THAT HE COULD PERSUADE THE CABINET TO REDRESS THE SITUATION.

3. MINISTER VREDELING RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT DUE TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS MANY MINISTRIES HAD BEEN REQUIRED TO TAKE CUTS AND THAT THE EXTENT OF THE CUT WHICH HE HAD FINALLY ACCEPTED FOR DEFENSE WAS SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN THE OTHER MINISTERS HAD INITIALLY PROPOSED TO HIM. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO RESTORE THE CUTS IN FULL; HE HAD HAD EITHER TO ACCEPT THE BUDGET HE HAD NEGOTIATED OR RESIGN. HOWEVER, HE CONTINUED, BECAUSE OF POLITICAL PRESSURE STEMMING FROM PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO DEFENSE CUTS, THE MATTER WOULD CERTAINLY BE DISCUSSED AGAIN BY THE CABINET IN THE PROCESS OF WHICH THE REACTIONS OF THE NETHERLANDS' ALLIES WOULD SURELY BE CONSIDERED.

4. IN RIPOSTE TO MY OBSERVATION THAT TO GROUND THE NEPTUNES WILL SEVERELY DIMINISH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DUTCH SURFACE VESSELS BY REDUCING THEIR AIR COVER, VREDELING MAINTAINED THAT THE NEPTUNE SYSTEM WAS OUTDATED AND INEFFECTUAL THAT THEY IN DETECTING NUCLEAR SUBMARINES. HE THEN VOLUNTEERED
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THAT THE GON HAD BEEN QUITE PREPARED IN THE SPRING OF 1975 TO COMMIT FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE NEPTUNES, HIS MINISTRY HAVING BOTH THE AUTHORIZATION AND THE APPROPRIATION. HOWEVER, AT JUST THAT TIME, THE LWF SELECTION PROCESS HAD HEATED UP, AND HE HAD HELD OFF ON MAKING A PATROL AIRCRAFT SELECTION AS HE DID NOT WANT TO OVERLY ANTAGONIZE THE FRENCH BY CHOOSING WITHIN THE SAME TIME FRAME BOTH THE YF-16 OVER THE MIRAGE AND P3C OVER THE ATLANTIQUE.

UNFORTUNATELY, HE CONTINUED, HE HAS NOW LOST THE APPROPRIATION.

5. I TOOK THE OCCASION TO RAISE WITH VREDELING THE SUBJECT OF PORT VISITS BY NUCLEAR POWERED U.S. VESSELS, ADVISING THAT WE STILL DID NOT HAVE CLEAR SAILING ON THIS ISSUE. VREDELING RESPONDED THAT HE WOULD WELCOME A VISIT BY THE CALIFORNIA AND HAD ALREADY CLEARLY EXPRESSED HIMSELF TO THIS EFFECT. ALTHOUGH THE MATTER WAS NOW BEFORE OTHER MINISTERIES (FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FINANCE) HE SAID THAT HE WOULD NONETHELESS TRY TO BREAK UP THE BUREAUCRATIC LOGJAM.

6. COMMENT: THE SECRETARY'S CALL WAS MOST TIMELY. THE FACT THAT VREDELING HAD THE CABINET MEETING STOPPED SO THAT HE COULD RECEIVE THE SEC NAV INDICATED HIS DESIRE TO BE ACCOMMODATING AND HIS INTEREST IN ALLIED REACTION TO THE PROPOSED CUTS. HE LEFT US BOTH WITH THE FEELING THAT THE GROUNDING OF THE NEPTUNES IS NOT IRREVERSIBLE. GOULD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NAVAL FORCES, TROOP REDUCTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975THEHA04901
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750334-0911
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750911/aaaaajgb.tel
Line Count: 135
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <23 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NETHERLANDS FORCE REDUCTIONS: SECNAV MIDDENDORF MEETING WITH MOD VREDELING
TAGS: MPOL, NL, NATO, (MIDDENDORF, J WILLIAM), (VREDELING, HENDRIKUS)
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006